Academic Performance Index (API)

What is the API?	The Academic Performance Index (API) is the cornerstone of California's Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 (PSAA). The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. It is a numeric index (or scale) that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. A school's score or placement on the API is an indicator of a school's performance level. The interim statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. A school's growth is measured by how well it is moving toward or past that goal. A school's base year API is subtracted from its growth API to determine how much the school grew in a year.
Performance Indicators Included	The indicators included in the base API and corresponding growth API are the same, and the APIs are calculated in the same way, as reflected in an API reporting cycle. The 2002 Base API, reported in February 2003, incorporates the results of two types of assessment that were part of California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program: (1) the Stanford 9, all content areas and (2) the California Standards Tests in English-Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Science (CST ELA, CST Math, and CST SS). In addition, the 2002 Base API also includes the results of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). The CST Math, CST SS, and CAHSEE are new indicators added to the API beginning with the 2002 API Base. The law requires that test results make up at least 60 percent of the API.
Indicator Weights	For the 2002 API Base, the Stanford 9 in grades 2-8 will receive 20 percent of the weight in the API, and the CSTs will receive 80 percent of the weight. The Stanford 9 in grades 9-11 will receive 12 percent of the weight in the API, the CSTs will receive 73 percent of the weight, and the CAHSEE will receive 15 percent of the weight. The 2002 API Base weighting demonstrates California's increased emphasis on tests that are closely aligned to state content standards, the CSTs and the CAHSEE, and reflects another major step towards the full alignment of standards, assessments, and accountability in California public schools.
Calculation	To calculate the 2002 Base API, individual student scores from each indicator are combined into a single number to represent the performance of a school. For the Stanford 9, the national percentile rank (NPR) for each student tested is used to make the calculation. For the CSTs, the standards-based performance level (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, or Far Below Basic) for each student tested is used. For the CAHSEE, a performance level of pass or not pass is used. The percentages of students scoring within each level are weighted and combined to produce a summary result for each content area. Summary results for content areas are then weighted and combined to produce a single number between 200 and 1000, which is the API for a school.
Statewide Performance Target	The PSAA requires that the State Board of Education (SBE) adopt a statewide API performance target upon approval of state performance standards. The SBE has adopted an interim statewide API performance target of 800. This target reflects a high level of performance that schools should strive to meet.
Growth Targets	The annual growth target for a school is five percent of the distance between a school's API Base and the statewide performance target of 800. The minimum growth target is one point. A school with an API of 800 or more must maintain its API of at least 800.
How is the API Used?	If a school meets participation and API growth criteria, it may be eligible to receive monetary awards. If a school is ranked in the bottom half of the statewide distribution and does not meet or exceed its growth targets, it may be identified for interventions.